

January 14, 2002

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ICC ANNOUNCES 618 AREA CODE FORUMS

The Illinois Commerce Commission has scheduled a series of five public forums in southern Illinois on proposed changes to the 618 area code.

The forums will begin at 7 p.m. each night at the following locations:

- * Wednesday, **January 23**, Olney City Hall, 300 S. Whittle, **Olney**;
- * Thursday, **January 24**, Alton City Hall, 101 E. 3rd Street, **Alton**;
- * Monday, **February 4**, Council chambers, Carbondale Civic Center, 200 S. Illinois Avenue, **Carbondale**;
- * Tuesday, February 19, Mt. Vernon City Hall, 1100 Main Street, **Mt. Vernon**; and
- * Monday, **March 4**, Greenville Municipal Building, 404 S. Third, **Greenville**.

A proposal for an overlay of the current 618 area code service area, when needed, is one possibility under consideration by the Illinois Commerce Commission. In an overlay only customers seeking a new or additional telephone number would be assigned the new area code while current customers would retain their 618 numbers. The ICC also indicated it would consider a proposal to divide the area geographically, with one area retaining 618 and the other being assigned a new area code. Public comment on the issue is welcome and a stenographic record of comments will be recorded for Commission consideration.

In early December the ICC voted to petition the Federal Communications Commission for approval of a number pooling plan, which, if approved, could assist in conserving unassigned numbers in the 618 area code and postponing the need for a new area code for as long as possible.

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